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THE NYPD'S NEW BEAT

THE BIG APPLE'S GLOBE-TROTTING COPS ARE HOOKING UP WITH A NOTORIOUS MERCENARY OUTFIT TO RE-TRAIN SADDAM'S OLD POLICE

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

Who do you hire to police a country recently ruled by a neo-Stalinist dictator, whose cops were little more than thugs with badges, and whose army was recently at war with the very forces now issuing their marching orders? If you're the U.S. State Department looking to police Iraq, you hire Dyncorp, a scandal-ridden U.S. military contractor with ties to the CIA and the NYPD.

According to the *New York Post*, "The State Department is looking for present and former NYPD cops willing to help restore order to Iraq by rebuilding and training new police departments." The article reports that Dyncorp, which is spearheading the search, is "especially interested in [hiring] present and former Big Apple law enforcers." The estimated salary for the officers is \$80,000 a year.

Controversy, however, surrounds the recent \$22 million contract awarded to the Virginia-based Dyncorp to "re-establish police, justice, and prison functions" in Iraq. Over the past decade, Dyncorp has been accused of everything from running an illegal sex ring in Bosnia to killing children in Ecuador as part of "Plan Colombia."

If the NYPD joins Dyncorp in Iraq, its deployment would be only the latest international adventure for what is rapidly becoming the world's leading globalized police force.

New Frontiers in the Global Sex Market?

Dyncorp, founded in 1946, quickly established itself as a leading information technology service and outsourcing contractor to the U.S. government. The California-based Computer Services Corporation (CSC) bought the company for

\$950 million in March 2003.

The company has a number of lucrative connections to America's defense industry. Catherine Fitts at Scoop Online muses that Dyncorp "seems to have had a hand... in information systems at the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, the CIA, the Air Force, the FBI, and SEC and even the New York Stock Exchange." Dyncorp has donated more than \$250,000 to the Republican Party. Ex-CIA Director — and leading candidate for the position of new Iraqi Information Minister — James Woolsey served on the Dyncorp board from 1988-89. And according to a pre-war report by ICONMEDIA's "Military Documentation Project," "[Dyncorp] has been helping to stockpile weapons in the Persian Gulf region that will be used in a pre-emptive attack on Iraq," a country that the company is now promising to help "rebuild." Perhaps reflecting these close government ties, Dyncorp's contract was "sole-sourced" rather than put up for competitive bid.

Even more incredible than Dyncorp's government connections are its scandal-plagued performances in the international arena.

As reported in the April 13 edition of the London-based *Observer*, "Dyncorp personnel contracted to the United Nation's police service in Bosnia were recently implicated in buying and selling prostitutes, including a girl as young as 12. Several Dyncorp employees were also accused of videotaping the rape of one of the young women." When Dyncorp employee Kathy Bolkovac blew the whistle on the sex ring, she was fired. A British employment tribunal recently ordered the company to pay Bolkovac more than \$173,000.

British labor judges aren't the only people suing Dyncorp. A group of Ecuadorian peasants have filed a class action against the company alleging that, as

part of "Plan Colombia," Dyncorp sprayed toxic herbicides that drifted across the Ecuadorian border, destroying crops and killing children.

This, then, is the company now being paid millions of dollars to introduce Iraqis to the "rule of law." And who better to help them do it than New York City's own

year veteran of Hussein's security forces.

Baghdad resident Basher Oba told Knight-Ridder Newspapers "we don't want the old police back. They took money from the people. They beat the people. We do not need this again." On April 20, Knight-Ridder reported that "the old [Iraqi] police are back, they're driving the same cars as

Dyncorp has been accused of everything from running an illegal sex ring in Bosnia to killing children in Ecuador as part of "Plan Colombia."

globetrotting Police Department?

Baghdad's Finest

Current recruitment ads on the International Police Programs website tout Dyncorp's search for "active duty, retired or recently separated sworn police officers, correctional officers or experienced judicial experts," to help "re-establish police, justice and prison functions in post-conflict Iraq." New York Police Department spokesman Michael P. O'Looney told *The Independent* that while "we understand the Department of State is working with a private firm to recruit police advisors from departments nationwide, the New York Police Department has no official involvement in that process."

Nevertheless, if current and former members of the NYPD descend on Iraq to help Dyncorp teach Iraqi citizens about American justice, it isn't at all certain whom they'll be training. More likely than not, the new Baghdad police force will include men like Zabar Abdul Razaq, the new interim police chief and a former general and 30-

before, they're wearing the same uniforms, and they have all the same faces."

The current crop of NYPD officers will follow in the footsteps of dozens of other police officials that have taken ex-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's policing tactics and shown them to the both America and the world:

Summer 1994: Following the U.S. invasion of Haiti, a "new" Haitian police force is trained by then-former now-current NYPD Chief Raymond Kelly.

Spring 2001: Ex-NYPD Chief William Bratton and his company, the Bratton Group LLC, sign a nine-month, \$180,000 contract to train city police in Caracas, Venezuela. During the violence in April 2002 that followed the temporary overthrow of Venezuela's democratically elected President Hugo Chavez, the Caracas police fire on unarmed pro-Chavez supporters, attack members of the local community media and shoot an advisor to the European parliament.

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What is the IMC?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and eco-systems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate.

We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

What can I do to get involved?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for *The Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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UNIFORM JUSTICE

UNITE TARGETS CINTA IN NATIONAL ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN

By TONY PECINOVSKY AND JOHN TARLETON

Victor Hidalgo worked for \$9 an hour in a cramped Cintas factory in Branford, Ct. unloading trucks full of dirty laundry. Employees received two sick days per year and were summarily fired if injured on the job.

"It's a very hard job, very dirty," he says of his work for the nation's largest uniform manufacturer. "They don't even provide gloves to handle contaminated laundry from the Red Cross."

Clorinda Valdivia, a mother of three, worked on an assembly line at Cintas' Central Islip, N.Y. plant, and was expected to repair 50 uniforms per hour in a room with no windows and no air conditioning. After six years at the plant she earned only \$7 per hour, with only one sick day per year. "The workers don't matter to them," she says. "The only things that matter are the production numbers."

When Hidalgo and Valdivia tried to organize their fellow workers to join a union earlier this year, both were fired. They have continued organizing and on April 23 they helped lead a spirited march through Midtown that stopped outside a pair of Starbucks to draw attention to the coffee giant's union-busting national apron and mat supplier, Cintas.

The march, called by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) Local 155, with support from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32 BJ and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 1500, was part of a national day of action in support of 17,000 non-managerial Cintas workers.

Similar protests took place simultaneously in Philadelphia, Detroit, Las Vegas and other cities across North America as part of a UNITE campaign called "Uniform Justice." "Starbucks portrays itself as socially responsible. They have fabricated an image that they care about workers... that they care about the environment," said UNITE Vice President Wilfredo Lauraucuent. "Well, if that is what your standards are, observe them. And have the same standard for all of your suppliers,



FIRED CINTAS WORKERS: Clorinda Valdivia and Victor Hidalgo protest outside a Starbucks to draw attention to the coffee giant's relationship with their former employer. PHOTO: Erick Setterlund

including Cintas."

Besides illegally firing union supporters, the Cincinnati-based company has been cited numerous times by the National Labor Relations Board for sexual and racial discrimination, refusing to pay overtime, surveillance and interrogation of employees.

Over 100 labor law violations have been filed against Cintas this year. On March 19, charges were brought in California against Cintas on behalf of 3,500 employees who were misclassified as overtime exempt and forced to work up to 70 hours a week. The lawsuits could cost Cintas \$75 to \$100 million in unpaid overtime. Last year the company agreed to settle a similar lawsuit over unpaid overtime in California for \$10 million. In 2002, Cintas made \$234 million profit on \$2.27 billion in sales.

Cintas also has a history of buying out

unionized competitors and closing their facilities, leaving thousands of union members out of work. In 1999, Cintas bought out a heavily unionized competitor – Unitog – and closed all but one of Unitog's unionized plants. Cintas also acquired Metropolitan Uniform Services, where employees had been unionized for 28 years, and then tried to decertify the union by promising higher wages and better benefits, unlawful conduct under U.S. labor law.

Despite Cintas intransigence, organizers aren't discouraged. Hidalgo passes out leaflets outside the plant he used to work in while management videotapes him from the roof. He and Valdivia continue to hold Saturday afternoon meetings with former co-workers whose hopes are greater than their fears.

"We are going to see more equality, more personal days with our children," Valdivia says.

WORKER SAFETY: MEMORIALS & RISK

By TONY PECINOVSKY



WAY DOWN IN THE MINES: Dangerous work gets little respect. Miners are among the most injury-prone workers in the country. PHOTO: Earl Dotter.

Since 1989 the AFL-CIO has observed April 28, Workers Memorial Day, as a day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job. Every year about 6,000 people are killed at work. Another 50,000 die annually from work-related injuries and diseases. And millions more are injured, maimed or become sick because of workplace conditions.

Workers Memorial Day is observed by nearly 100 countries. It has been officially endorsed by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Labour Organization, and five countries – Canada, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan and Thailand – formally recognize April 28 as Workers Memorial Day.

This year marks the 15th annual observance of Workers Memorial Day. While injury and illness rates have fallen from 11 per 100 workers in 1973 to 5.7 per 100 in 2001, much more work needs to be done to address safety problems at work. Obtaining more reliable safety equipment, creating stronger training programs and strengthening OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) requirements and regulations are just a few of the suggestions

advocated by the AFL-CIO.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration has done everything in its power to weaken the health and safety regulations already in existence. For example, President George W. Bush's proposed fiscal 2004 budget would cut money for enforcing workplace health and safety laws.

The administration's disregard for the safety of working people is exemplified by the attempted packing of the federal courts with ultra-conservative, reactionary, anti-union appointees.

Federal judges – 900 men and women who sit on our federal district courts, courts of appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court – are appointed for life and enforce constitutional and statutory rights. They also hear challenges to OSHA rules and regulations, and have the power to overturn or strengthen safety and health rules enforced by OSHA. And if the Bush administration has its way the current health and safety regulation will be weakened even more.

In 2000, the average U.S. worker put in 1,978 hours, up 36 hours – almost a full week – since 1990. With more families working longer, and more safety and health regulations under attack, a strong OSHA, forcing employers to adhere to higher health and safety standards, is desperately needed.

GARDENS UPDATE



FANTASY GARDEN SURVIVES: Helen Mason feeds Minnie Pear, garden defender and long-time resident. **INSET:** Neighborhood kids celebrate. **ALL PHOTOS ON PAGE:** Erick Setterlund.

DIRECT ACTION!

BROWNSVILLE DUCKS BLOCKADE BULLDOZER BULLIES

BY JOHN TARLETON

When Horace Watt arrived at Fantasy Garden on the afternoon of April 16, four ducklings halted what years of lawsuits and negotiations couldn't: his Caterpillar bulldozer.

"I have heart, miss. I have children at home, and something of beauty for African-Americans should be kept," Helen Mason, the garden's caretaker, remembers him telling her.

Using the reprieve, Mason contacted press and supporters who were willing to risk arrest in the quiet green oasis she had helped create in the middle of Brownsville, East Brooklyn. The sudden glare of a round-the-clock vigil has forced the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and real estate developer DeCosta Headley of Diversified Inch by Inch Inc. to back off, for now.

While it is uncertain how much longer Fantasy's defenders can prevail, one thing is certain: the battle over the fate of some of New York's community gardens is heating up again, eight months after the City and New York Attorney General Elliott Spitzer settled a long-running lawsuit with an agreement that spared many but not all of New York's 543 community gardens.

"It's going to be a crazy spring with lots of bulldozing," says Arsh Javadi of the More Gardens Coalition. "The legal machinery is kicking in."

The Spitzer agreement allows 193 community gardens to

continue in the City's Green Thumb program and another 198 gardens to be transferred to either the Parks Department or a non-profit land trust organization. Thirty-eight gardens (including Fantasy) were fast-tracked for immediate demolition, while another 114 remained under HPD jurisdiction and subject to possible future sale or development by the City after going through a Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) that requires the City to offer alternative properties (if available) to affected gardeners.

Brownsville, a predominantly African-American community, was especially hard hit, losing all but two of its gardens even though Community District 16 (Brownsville-Ocean Hill) has 1,244 vacant lots. Instead, the garden lots are being handed over for \$1 a piece to Headley. He in turn plans to build "market-rate" housing units that will cost upwards of \$300,000 in a community where the average annual income is \$18,792.

"This is a case of environmental racism," says City Councilman Charles Barron, who represents a neighboring district "...too bad ducks can't vote. Trees can't vote. They [the City and developers] are only interested in elements that make them money."

"Brownsville is the golden egg and they're swarming here like locusts," says Mason, whose 2,400 sq. foot garden is slated to be replaced by five housing units.

Energized by the success of the round-the-clock vigil, Fantasy Garden supporters held a rally April 28 at the office of District 41 councilmember, Tracy Boyland, who they criticize for not doing more to protect the district's community gardens.

Elsewhere, about 50 gardeners and activists in Melrose Commons, dressed as strawberries, tomatoes, eggplants and butterflies, marched on April 23 from 162nd St. and Courtland Ave. to the Bronx Borough President's office to urge Bronx's leaders to protect the 23 gardens in Melrose. Particularly galling for Javadi is that HPD has been rapidly transferring vacant lots to developers, which means there could be few if any alternative sites for gardeners whose land is condemned under ULURP.

"HPD needs to develop a totally new policy of creating green space alongside housing," Javadi said. "We shouldn't have to fight them every time."

Meanwhile, the flower beds and fruit trees are finally blooming at Fantasy, and its defenders are digging in for a prolonged struggle over every foot of contested garden space in the city. "Depending how much fight we put in [here] affects how many gardens we preserve or even add in the future," Javadi says.

For additional information, see moregardens.org.



JERSEY COPS INDICTED IN CHAGO SLAY CASE

BY JOHN TARLETON

Family and friends of Santiago "Chago" Villanueva celebrated a crucial breakthrough in his legal case on April 16 even as they mourned his senseless death a year ago at the hands of four Bloomfield, New Jersey officers.

Villanueva, 35, a popular community activist and Afro-Dominican folk musician in the Washington Heights community, died in police custody April 16, 2002 while experiencing a severe epileptic seizure at a Bloomfield garment factory where he worked.

Villanueva's co-workers called an ambulance, but the police arrived first. Thinking the dreadlocked Villanueva was on drugs, the four white police officers handcuffed him, shouted profanities, demanded that he and his co-workers speak English and forced him to the ground and sat on top of him. He stopped breathing. Two of the four police officers had EMT training.

Villanueva's estate recently filed a \$55 million wrongful death suit against the Township of Bloomfield. On April 15, Richard Chiarello, 43, Vincent DeFabrizio, 44, Frank Furfaro, 37, and Gerald Filippone, 32, were indicted on charges of reckless endangerment, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The four officers are currently on desk duty and receiving full pay.

"It's a small relief for me knowing that something has been done," said Villanueva's widow, Lisaann Villanueva. "They [the D.A.'s office] keep putting me off. They kept everything hush-hush. They don't want to go after four of their own."

"It's a little bit of good news. It makes it [the anniversary] a little bit more bearable," added Nina Paulino, a friend of Villanueva since he immigrated to the U.S. nine years ago.

After holding a late afternoon rally outside the police precinct in Bloomfield, about 40 people turned out for the ceremony in Washington Heights, which was held in a small park on the corner of 170th and Broadway down the street from where Villanueva used to live. As dusk turned to nightfall, neighbors gathered in a circle, lit candles and took turns speaking.

"We're making a commitment to each other," said one woman.

"When you lose your memory, you lose the possibility for making justice," said Radames Rodriguez. "And if you lose a sense of justice, you have no future."

The somber candlelight circle eventually gave way to the spirited drumming and singing of Villanueva's fellow Pa'lo musicians who chanted "¡A pa'lo es San Santiago! ¡A pa'lo! ¡Es San Santiago!"

"We understand it's a long struggle," said Paulino. "But, we're not going anywhere."

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A WORLD OF TROUBLE: DEADLOCKED U.N. STRUGGLES TO SOLVE GROWING CRISIES

BY DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. — The United Nations is at an impasse, deadlocked by U.S. hostility to the world organization and by U.N. uncertainty about how to proceed.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has absented himself from headquarters. Annan is visiting European capitals. At stops along the way, he murmurs reassurances.

"I've just had a very good discussion with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and I are confident that we will be able to work with all the other leaders to find a way forward."

Nobody would know it from the news reports, but the U.N. Security Council has its hands full with numerous difficult situations — the future of the Iraqi oil-for-food program and the Iraqi sanctions regime; a major food crisis in Africa; fighting in Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Congo; the perennial Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the North Korea-U.S. crisis.

Every one of those issues presents itself in desperate terms.

For example, James Morris, executive director of the World Food Program (WFP), addressed the Security Council April 7 on Africa's food crisis as a "threat to peace and security." In Africa, Morris said, "nearly 200 million people are malnourished and 50 million are severely at risk."

The causes of the food crisis, he said, are a lethal combination of recurring droughts,

failed economic policies, hostility and warfare, and "the extraordinary, almost unquantifiable impact of HIV/AIDS."

Morris asked: "How do you turn around food production in countries that no longer have a viable agricultural extension system? How do rural children learn to farm when their parents are too sick to teach them?"

WFP will have a budget in Africa this year of \$1.8 billion, which equals the entire WFP budget worldwide in 2002 and is substantially more than the budget of the U.N. itself, which totals \$1.2 billion.

To the Victor...

Hans Blix, chief U.N. weapons inspector, went before the Security Council April 22 and stated that U.N. arms inspectors were ready to return to Iraq. Gustavo Zlaouine, representing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told the Council that the IAEA "had found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq."

However, the U.S. declared that Iraqi arms inspections would now be an activity of "coalition" forces — the U.S. and Great Britain.

Council members continued to differ with the U.S. on such matters as Iraqi sanctions. The U.S. had called for an immediate end to the sanctions, while France proposed a temporary suspension,

saying that they should not be permanently lifted until U.N. inspectors certified Iraq's disarmament.

The U.S. is reportedly working on a new resolution in the Security Council that would give U.S. forces control of Iraq's oil, the interim or post-war government and arms inspections. The World Bank or International Monetary Fund would supervise oil revenues.

The U.N. oil-for-food program is now scheduled to end June 3. The U.S. would want the U.N. to affirm its position on these matters by that date.

How will France and Russia respond to the U.S. proposals? Will the Security Council approve the prospective U.S. resolution? Debate could prove to be as divisive as the pre-war disagreement on arms inspections and a U.N.-endorsed attack on Iraq.

More Hotspots

With reference to America's other war in Afghanistan, U.N. representative Hedi Annabi recently informed the Council that "security outside Kabul must significantly improve. The lack of security threatens the peace process at all levels."

On Israel-Palestine, Danilo Turk, U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, briefed the Council, observing that "there is a growing realization of the urgent need to address the conflict... A comprehensive, just and lasting peace... is too

important for the parties to be deterred by early difficulties."

Haiti is yet another story of extreme deprivation. In Port-au-Prince, the U.N. country team appealed for \$84 million to meet the emergency food, water, medical, and education needs of the poorest of Haiti's 8.3 million people during the next 18 months.

Meanwhile, the U.S. continues to owe the U.N. \$1.4 billion in dues and assessments.

President George W. Bush has signaled that the U.N. will have a "vital" but limited and still unspecified part in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Richard N. Perle, who contributed an article to *The Guardian* (UK) March 21 entitled, "Thank God for the death of the U.N.," calling it an "abject failure," resigned as chairman of the Pentagon's Defense Advisory Board following conflict-of-interest revelations in relation to Global Crossing, a telecommunications company; Perle remained as a member of the board.

Remedies to U.N. inadequacies are available. Many proposals have been made over the years to strengthen the U.N. The original provisions of the U.N. Charter might be put into effect. The Charter might be amended. The Security Council veto might be eliminated. The U.N. General Assembly might be revitalized.

None of these possibilities have ever been seriously debated.

IRAQI ENVIRONMENT

CONFLICT LEAVES A WOUNDED LAND

BY KRISTEN MCLEOD-BALL

The "embedded" journalists' snapshot of the invasion of Iraq — whirling sand and swarming soldiers set against the backdrop of an uninhabited desert landscape — do not bring to mind the environmental impact of war. What damage, after all, can be done to a desolate and lifeless desert?

Plenty. For one, Iraq's land is anything but lifeless. From cropland to desert, a variety of ecosystems — already weakened by years of bombing, sanctions and neglect — have been pummeled by the most recent round of fighting.

The first Gulf War's environmental legacy included depleted uranium (DU), hundreds of oil well fires, billions of gallons of crude oil dumped in land and at sea, and burning caches of chemical weapons. That conflict resulted in one of the most toxic battlefields ever. Gulf War II escaped most of these disasters, but not all.

The Pentagon won't say how much of the highly toxic DU munitions it fired in this war, but observers say it surpassed the 290 tons used in the 1991 war. Pollution from damaged oil wells, pipelines and oil-filled trenches was still a major effect of this war, according to the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). It says leaks of unburned oil from the trenches could be even more dangerous than the fires, as some components are highly carcinogenic, toxic and volatile.

Ross Mirkarimi, who coordinated the environmental impact investigation of the 1991 Harvard Study Team in Iraq, says the dangers of burning oil include toxic cloud

plumes "of nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide... that [could] return in the form of acid or 'black' rain. This caused the accelerated erosion of soil and contamination of water sources."

The major threats to Iraqi croplands come from a more indirect source — according to Barry Came of the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization: they simply won't be able to be harvested.

"In the south... the harvest should be underway right now. But farmers were displaced from their fields during the fighting," says Came, and so the crop's future is uncertain. One third of Iraq's 1.7 million ton harvest would usually occur in this area.

Even in more isolated regions, the war affected the environment — as heavy military vehicles cruised over the Iraqi deserts, they left a clear footprint. The desert crust, a thin layer of gravel or biological material that protects the lighter sand beneath it, could not withstand the pressure of groups of tanks. Under their weight, the crust broke. Due to its fragile nature, it may not fully reform for many years, according to Dr. Robert Stebbins, a professor at UC Berkeley who studies the deserts of California. He explained these breaks could cause wind erosion and clouds of airborne dust — increasing respiratory problems and coating plant leaves in the desert and nearby agricultural areas, which decreases their ability to survive.

Eric McDonald of the Desert Research Institute spoke more about the importance of the crust: "During storms, rain will run off the desert crust into low-lying channels, where water accumulates and vegetation

develops." When the crust is broken, water is absorbed before reaching the plants that need it, thus damaging the desert food chain that includes a variety of insects, reptiles, small mammals and birds.

The most persistent environmental hazard comes from Depleted Uranium munitions. DU is nearly twice as dense as lead and is the byproduct of the uranium enrichment process. It is provided free to weapons manufacturers by the nuclear

DU is the stuff of nightmares. It is toxic, radioactive and pollutes for 4,500 million years.

— U.S. Army health physicist
Dr. Doug Rokke

industry. The isotope uranium-238 constitutes over 99 percent of depleted uranium and has a half-life of 4.5 billion years.

The U.S. uses DU weapons in M1A1 Abrams tanks, A-10 aircraft and Apache helicopters. Independent researchers say it is a significant factor in the huge jumps in cancer rates and birth defects in Iraq since 1990. Despite years of Pentagon denials, the U.S. Army was forced to admit it was a hazard and that it unnecessarily exposed thousands of troops to DU in the first Gulf War.

U.S. Army health physicist Dr. Doug Rokke, who was sent to the Persian Gulf in 1991 as part of a DU clean-up team, says it

"is the stuff of nightmares. It is toxic, radioactive and pollutes for 4,500 million years. It causes lymphoma, neuropsychological disorders and short-term memory damage. In semen, it causes birth defects... This whole thing is a crime against God and humanity." Of the original 100 primary members of Dr. Rokke's team, 30 have since died.

From 1989 to 1994 registered cancer cases skyrocketed in Baghdad by 50 percent, in Basra by more than 150 percent and in the governorate of Meisan by nearly 500 percent. During the same period, registered congenital abnormalities increased about 250 percent.

Recently, both the UNEP and an official British scientific body have called for the clean-up of DU contaminated sites — something the Pentagon has rejected. They say DU is especially harmful for small children. Use in urban areas only expands the number of people who could be exposed, and according to UNEP's desk study, "Television pictures broadcast by the media on 8 April showed A-10 aircraft attacking both the Planning and Information Ministries in Baghdad. Expert observers considered that DU munitions were used in these attacks."

It is difficult to make assessments about the extent of DU risks without accurate information regarding its recent usage, which only the military has right now. The UK Royal Society issued a press release on April 24 asking "coalition" forces to "reveal where and how much depleted uranium was used in the conflict in Iraq, so that an effective clean-up and monitoring program of both soldiers and civilians can begin." They are awaiting a reply.

REVIVAL

THE CHURCH OF STOP BOMBING WANTS TO SAVE YOUR SOUL



On April 15, Rev. Billy and his "Stop Bombing Gospel Choir" called on their congregation at St. Marks Church to avoid the federal ATM and instead learn the basics of a "gift economy." Rev. Billy (a.k.a. Bill Talen) is a political performer and Lower East Side icon. He started campaigning against consumerism in the late 1990's as the irreverent pastor of "The Church of Stop Shopping." He made many appearances in the playgrounds of Manhattan's corporate giants, getting blacklisted by Starbucks and chalking up a string of arrests for his anti-sweatshop "act-outs" at the Disney store.

The Reverend re-christened the Church of Stop Shopping as the "Church of Stop Bombing" soon after September 11 as he considers war another product with a well-produced ad campaign. When the service at St. Marks ended, the Reverend headed to the 33rd Street Post Office to preach to late tax filers. Along the way, I caught up with his wide strides hoping to find some more answers.

INTERVIEW BY SASHA NEVSKAYA

IMC: How do you feel about the present situation?

RB: It's a dark time. We definitely have thugs in charge and right now it's not easy to know what to do. We are at a tremendous crossroads, mostly we are emotional — we don't feel very good because people are dying every minute. On February 15 we had millions on the streets saying "peace" in unison, and George Bush said: "That's a focus group and I am going to ignore them and instead pay attention to weapons dealers, Big Gas, Big Oil and Big Media." February 15 was a high point of expressing an opinion in a public space. If that has no impact in a democracy we just have to rethink going into more serious ways of denying the government money.

IMC: In your speech, you referred to the war as a product. What other "products" do you think the government is selling?

RB: Well right now it's violence, financing military, paying money to wealthy people by way of tax cuts, selling privileged financial agreements with the government. They are using tax money to make a living, they are manipulating us and getting away with what they can. They lie — they've just been caught too many times lying — Enron, WorldCom, now the Iraq war...

IMC: Is there a way to fight this system? How does the concept of "Gift Economy" fit in?

RB: "Gift Economy" is a local economy. It's

in keeping our money closer to our bodies, closer to our neighborhoods. It's a pretty basic idea — just don't trust them with the money, they've abused the trust.

For years we've been living in the Clinton-Gore neoliberalism of "shopping is good." And now we see how the military guys took this idea and ran with it with the permission given to them by 9/11.

I hope that people are starting to understand that a shopping-centric culture directs energies in a particular way — towards making of products, towards fossil fuel. We won't start this gift economy unless we have some discipline, unless we stop letting chain stores in, unless we are strict about our tax money.

IMC: You've mentioned in your "prayer" that you've been discouraged, and it seems to be the trend with the peace movement — the events were hard on everybody. Where do you find your support?

RB: There is something oddly counter-intuitive about the whole notion of peace, maybe, because this culture is apolitical. People can't think politically here — they get upset when you raise the basic questions. Europe has the tradition. Anti-consumerism — what my group does in Starbucks and Disney — has a very strong following in Britain and especially in France, where the most celebrated intellectual writers and thinkers are anti-consumerists. Here we are really "kooks," we have to get our feelings



PREACHING WITH A CHOIR (Top) Singer gets the spirit at recent St. Mark's Church performance. **WITH FEELING NOW:** (Above) Rev. Billy preaches seditious salvation. **PHOTOS:** Erick Setterlund

of support from our performances, while the larger culture considers the anti-consumerist movement "kooky." I am going to Britain and France to be in that support and find out what it feels like. I certainly felt support tonight. I love being at the heart of my community, being useful, and tonight was wonderful. I'll live on what happened tonight all summer long.

For more information on Reverend Billy's performances go to revbilly.com

"SHOCK AND AWE" FOR FUN AND PROFIT

By IMC STAFF

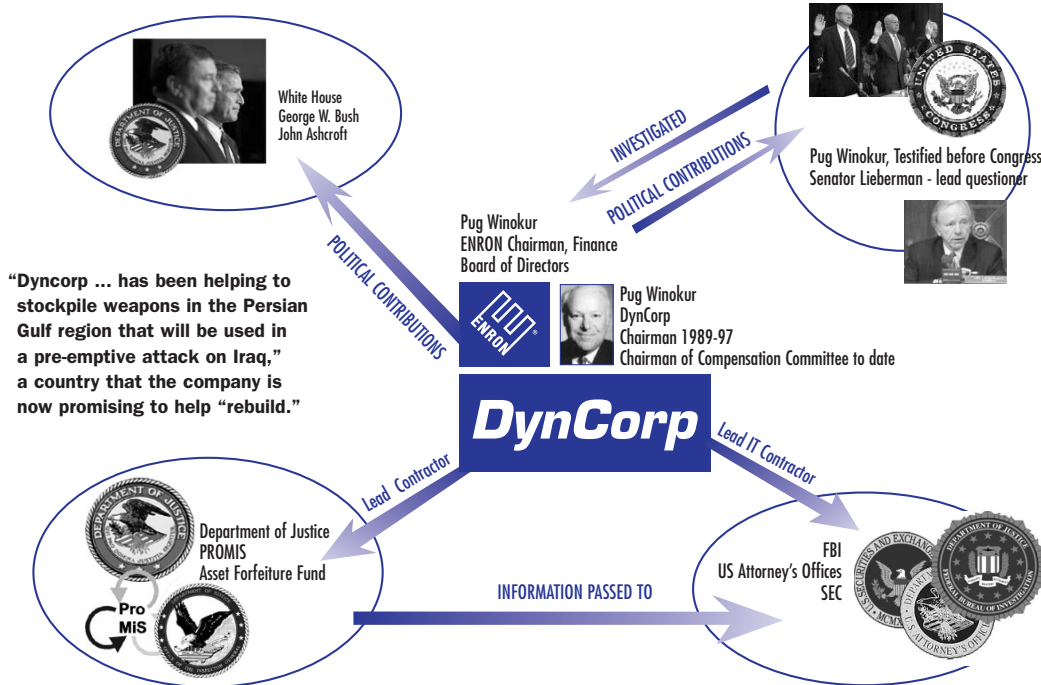
Shock and Awe — the idea of using massive bombardment to psychologically cow an opponent into submission — received a decidedly negative public reaction when the Pentagon suggested using the tactic against Iraq. The idea was scrapped, but that hasn't stopped America's finest entrepreneurial minds from trying to make a quick buck off the resulting catch phrase. The U.S. Patent and Trademark office has received dozens of applications since March to trademark the term for hundreds of items (no trademarks pending yet for "Decapitation Strike"). The following is just a sample of what may be coming soon to your corner deli.

1. "Shock and Awe" Condoms
2. "Shock and Awe" Energy and Fruit-flavored Drinks
3. "Shock and Awe" Fireworks
4. "Shock and Awe" Pesticides and Herbicides
5. "Shock and Awe" Teddy Bears
6. "Shock and Awe" Sandals
7. "Shock and Awe" Coffee Mugs
8. "Shock and Awe" Eyeglasses
9. "Shock and Awe" Teriyaki Sauce
10. "Shock and Awe" Greeting Cards
11. "Shock and Awe" Coffee and Tea
12. "Shock and Awe" Head Wraps
13. "Shock and Awe" Dollhouses
14. "Shock and Awe" Firearms
15. "Shock and Awe" Telecommunications Equipment
16. "Shock and Awe" Date Books
17. "Shock and Awe" Legal Services
18. "Shock and Awe" Ketchup
19. "Shock and Awe" Dietary Supplements
20. "Shock and Awe" Jewelry
21. "Shock and Awe" Office supplies
22. "Shock and Awe" Yo-yos
23. "Shock and Awe" Shampoo
24. "Shock and Awe" Playing Cards
25. "Shock and Awe" Televisions
26. "Shock and Awe" Exercise Equipment
27. "Shock and Awe" Underwear
28. "Shock and Awe" Mayonnaise
29. "Shock and Awe" Calendars
30. "Shock and Awe" Corn Chips

For more information — or to register your own trademark! — go to: uspto.gov

THE NYPD GOES GLOBAL:

NEW YORK'S FINEST AND OTHER HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATORS PREPARE TO POLICE IRAQ



a special database. The Department defends the activity but destroyed all the information collected after the questioning came to light; the NYCLU contends that "this is a practice that never should have happened and raised serious First Amendment concerns."

Despite all the controversy, how did the New York City Police Department become one of the most called-upon international crime fighting units in the world? NYPD supporters argue that Giuliani-era police techniques contributed to New York's crime rate decrease of the early 1990's. They cite the so-called "Broken Windows Theory," coined by conservative sociologist James Q. Wilson: "If the first broken window in a building is not repaired, then people who like breaking windows will assume that no one cares about the building." In other words, crime is seen as the result of lax police efforts, and stricter law enforcement policy is the primary ingredient to promoting safer communities.

But critics of the NYPD see no direct correlation between New York's crime rate decrease and its "zero-tolerance" approach to policing. According to a recent study released by the Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, "Strict law enforcement approaches emphasizing arrests, prosecutions, convictions and incarceration do not reduce crime rates." Even some of the less dogmatic supporters of recent NYPD policies admit that there is no guarantee that policing techniques applied in New York City will make a similar impact overseas — whether in Iraq, Mexico City or elsewhere.

As Dyncorp International continues to implement its plans to "rebuild" Iraq's criminal justice system, its recruitment drive may net dozens of ex-New York City police officials. If that turns out to be the case, Iraqis may soon find themselves learning about New York City-style law enforcement firsthand.

NYPD

continued from page 1

March 2002: Brown University hires the Bratton Group to gather information about campus safety and to make recommendations for improvements. After 22 days of meetings and three sparsely attended forums, Bratton releases a 40-page study that contains one overriding recom-

mendation: arm the Brown campus police. October 2002: Rudy Giuliani's consulting firm, Giuliani Partners, signs a one-year contract to revamp policing in Mexico City. Giuliani, who presided over New York during the controversial police killings of Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismond (among others) and the attack on Abner Louima, tells reporters that he will "help

Mexican police implement some of the same tactics he employed in New York during his two terms as mayor."

More recently, NYPD officials admitted asking dozens of protesters arrested at recent anti-war gatherings questions about their political affiliations, schools attended, feelings about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and other sensitive issues, recording them in



NYPD BLACK & BLUE

NYPD for sale, now available as:
 NYPD tub toy \$6.99
 NYPD pencil tube \$5.00
 NYPD car key chain \$3.00

NYPD inspires TV:
 NYPD Blue
 Brooklyn North Homicide Squad
 Brooklyn South
 Law and Order
 Law and Order Criminal Intent
 Law and Order Special Victims Unit
 Barney Miller
 Kojak

Officers ever convicted of committing homicide while on duty: 3.
 People killed by NYPD on-duty cops, 1992-1996: 187.
 Total civil awards to victims of NYPD abuse in 1998: \$28.3 million.
 Total civil awards to victims of NYPD abuse in 1999: \$40 million.
 NYPD's 2002-2003 budget: \$3.4 billion
 Average humanitarian aid delivered annually since 1991 to Iraq through the oil-for-food program: \$2.2 billion
 Number of NYPD officers in 2003: 39,110
 Projected number of soldiers needed to occupy Iraq: 75,000-100,000

WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE... WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR NEWS?

Naomi Klein says *The Independent*

"mixes the spirit of direct action with a searing critique of corporate power."

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QUALITY OF LIFE CRUSADERS EXPAND GIULIANI-ERA POLICING



THE HEAVY HAND: From bullying rallies to Operation Atlas, repressive policing has become the rule, rather than the exception. PHOTO BY: FRED ASKEW

BY IMC STAFF

One night this January Charles Burnham jumped on his bicycle to buy cat food at the corner grocery a block-and-a-half from his home in Prospect Lefferts Gardens. A half-hour later, he was being held in a cell at the 71st Police Precinct.

Burnham, a professional violinist, had the misfortune to briefly veer onto the sidewalk to avoid a patrolman. Despite apologizing to the officer's enraged partner, a patrol car was called and the unlucky musician was taken away.

The incident angered local residents. "While the cops are busy with this sort of thing, the real criminals can have a heyday and get away," complained Celestine Thompson, a neighbor of Burnham.

Burnham was netted in "Operation Clean Sweep," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's continuation of Giuliani's "Quality of Life" initiative. From January 2002 to January 2003, 11,000 people were arrested in New York and 110,000 more were issued summonses, according to the mayor's office.

Under Giuliani, misdemeanor arrests shot up almost 75 percent from 1993 to 2000 for a total of 224,663 arrests. He also put in place stop-and-frisk policies that many saw as thinly disguised fishing expeditions for information. In fact, a review of 175,000 such stops from January 1998 through March 1999 found only one in nine incidents resulted in an arrest. Former Chief William Bratton initiated the policies to pile up arrests so as to feed that information into the computer crime tracking system known as COMSTAT.

After September 11, the fear is that those caught in such fishing expeditions may find themselves in the grasp of John Ashcroft's Justice Department. In addition, the hyper-surveillance instituted in the 1990s smoothed the way for the dramatically increased policing seen in the city today.

While there was an outpouring of support for New York cops after September 11, it hasn't been reciprocated. One lawyer says "Our files are bulging with charges of police brutality that occurred after September 11."

Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly link Operation Clean Sweep to their campaign to combat terrorism, a.k.a. "Operation Atlas." The operation includes more police at Manhattan bridges and tunnels, use of bomb-sniffing dogs and radiation detectors to screen vehicles, and armed troops patrolling city subways and commuter trains. With Operation Atlas costing New York \$5 million a week, the city will be hard pressed to maintain the quality of life sweeps.

Now that the NYPD has been freed of the Handschu Agreement, which limited its ability to surveil peaceful First Amendment activities, there is a growing consensus that information gathering is the new police order of the day.

— Pandi Hopkins contributed to this report.

WAR ODDS 2003

BY STEVE WISHNIA

With a bellicose imperial junta in power in D.C., and no other country coming even close to matching U.S. military might, the question isn't whether we're going to war again soon, it's where. War protects their economic domination (and provides juicy contracts), makes them feel manly and well-hung, fulfills their religious-apocalyptic visions, intimidates other countries and stifles domestic dissent. So who's next?

EASTERN DIVISION	SYRIA	Oh, sure, Colin Powell says we have no plans to invade, but the Bradley fighting mandibles are already ranting and rumbling about "weapons of mass destruction" and "ties to terrorists," plus it's got a weak army and a Ba'athist dictatorship. With the troops already over in Iraq, this could be like picking Secretariat in the '73 Belmont.	Odds: 1-2
	IRAN	Bigger than Iraq and chance they have nukes, but wouldn't it be nice to knock out another set of bad-attitude ragheads, to avenge the 1979 hostage seizure and exorcise the specter of Jimmy Carter's failure? Who cares if there are moderates in the government? The number of Americans who know what the CIA did to Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953 might not fill Giants Stadium.	Odds: 2-1
	NORTH KOREA	Claims it has nukes, and could take out Japan or South Korea if it used them. Cooler heads will probably prevail, but it can't be counted out.	Odds: 6-1
	PAKISTAN	Islamabad's military has tons of links to al-Qaeda, and it wouldn't be a bad wager that Osama himself is holed up in a madrassah in Northwest Frontier Province. 140 million people, a nominally pro-U.S. regime with nukes, and harsh, mountainous terrain even its own government can't control should give hawks reason to pause.	Odds: 9-1
	SAUDI ARABIA	It's the main pro-US government in the Arab world, and Muslims wouldn't enjoy seeing GIs throw pork-and-beans MRE wrappers on the Ka'aba. Unlikely, unless major unrest threatens Carlyle and ExxonMobil.	Odds: 15-1
WESTERN DIVISION	COLOMBIA	We already ARE at war here, hiring mercenaries to spray a lethal glyphosate/fuel-oil mix on Putumayo peasants in the name of eradicating cocaine. If the war on drugs eclipses the war on terrorism — or if the FARC guerrillas kill any Americans — a good bet.	Odds: 5-2
	VENEZUELA	President Hugo Chavez is the perfect candidate for destabilization, with his anti-U.S. attitude, populist rhetoric, and just enough personality cult and repression to scare off liberals. But a full-scale invasion would be heavy-handed; look for slow IMF strangulation or a repeat of the 2002 coup.	Odds: 7-1
	CUBA	Its very existence is a perennial thorn in the imperial side, but no plausible military threat — or even much of a political threat — any more. Easier to wait for Castro to kick off.	Odds: 12-1
	FRANCE	Shrub isn't THAT demented — yet.	Odds: 150-1
	SAN FRANCISCO	"Baghdad by the Bay" features rampant homosexuality, medical marijuana, and the most militant U.S. antiwar protests this year.	Odds: 150-1



LANDLESS

+BY TATIANA REIS

MOVEMENT

It was 1999 and, as much as he tried, Francisco da Silva could no longer find work. At that same time, a cousin had told him about an MST (Landless Workers' Movement) meeting. He went. From that day on, he would take control and change the course of his life.

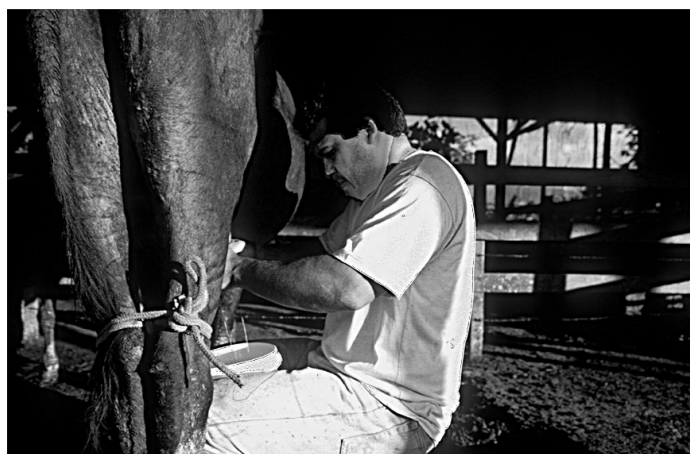
The MST, one of the world's most successful social movements, was officially founded in 1984 after the Catholic Church and peasants joined forces to occupy an unproductive parcel of land in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. While Brazilian media works overtime to portray MST as violent and irresponsible, over one million people have settled on land taken over by the organization.

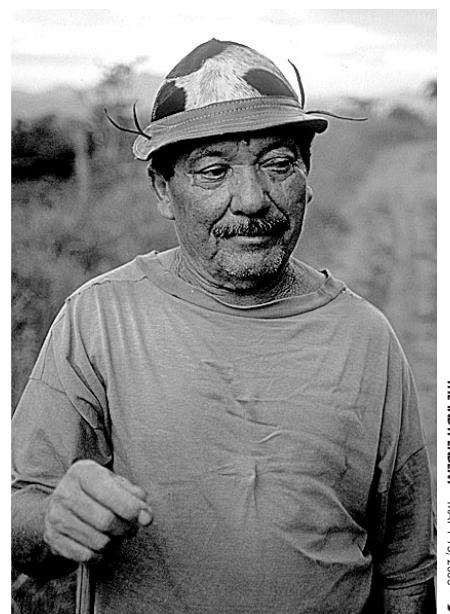
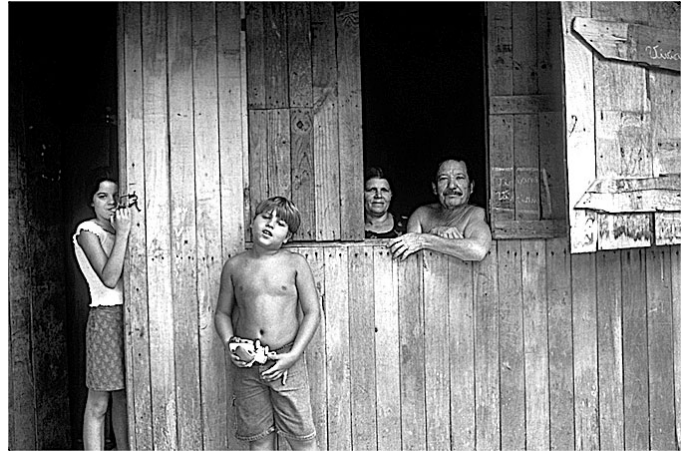
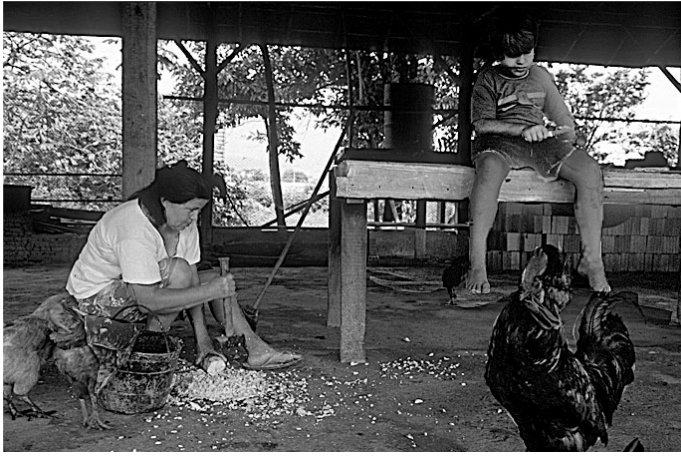
Da Silva, who grew up in Brazil's impoverished northeast and moved to the city in the mid-1970s, joined 500 other people in taking over an idle farm in the north of the state of Rio de Janeiro. He lived in a tent for two months almost without food and water and was one of 60 settlers to persevere. The settlers built a community center, a road cutting across the farm and a school. They cleaned old houses, brought electricity and running water and divided the land among themselves.

Now 62, he is president of the community association. He organizes workshops, conferences and improvements for the community. The families meet in an open democratic manner each week to discuss problems, solutions and next steps. Da Silva, his wife and their five children plant and harvest their own produce, and own some cows, chickens, pigs and ducks. When there is surplus, Da Silva rows his canoe to the nearest town to sell his products.

The land will soon be his. He will be able to request government credit to build a better house for his family, buy more crops and continue to grow the community he helped create. He is critical of corruption within the MST and does not hesitate to support and participate in other takeovers of lands. For him, the MST is the peasants that live on the land. "We are the MST. The MST only exists because of us." As for the new government of President Luis Ignacio "Lula" da Silva, he says, "I hope he makes Agrarian Reform a reality. This is the only way people of this country can know justice. As for me, I will keep fighting."

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IN BRIEF

NYCLU TO NYPD: STOP BEATING PROTESTERS

On April 26, the New York Civil Liberties Union called on city police to stop using physical force against peaceful protesters. The recommendation came as the NYCLU issued a 40-page report based on 350 eyewitness accounts of what happened at the Feb. 15 anti-war protest.

NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman said, "On February 15, the NYPD engaged in the massive interference with peaceful protest, starting with the denial of a permit to march; excessive use of force, including the use of horses to charge into crowds of peaceful demonstrators and the use of pepper spray on people simply trying to get to the rally; and pervasive constitutional violations of those arrested, including political interrogations, denial of access to counsel and even forcing some to stand chained together outside for a long time in the freezing cold following hours in cold, dark unheated vans without food, water or medical care." Read study at www.nyclu.org

CUNY LAW BARS STUDENTS FROM HONORING STEWART

A majority of the CUNY Law School's graduating law class presented Dean Kristin Booth Glen last week with a petition nominating movement lawyer Lynne Stewart as public interest lawyer of the year.

Dean Booth Glen informed the students at a meeting on Tuesday that she could not allow the class to present its award during the graduation ceremony.

Stewart was arrested last April on charges levied by Attorney General John Ashcroft that she helped an Egyptian sheik to direct terrorist operations from his prison cell.

DOCS MISDIAGNOSE "LAWSUIT CRISIS"

The American Medical Association's claim of a "lawsuit crisis" in 18 states is baseless according to a study recently released by the Center for Justice and Democracy. The study reveals that the AMA suppressed evidence showing there is either no reliable evidence of a crisis or that the number of claims is decreasing. Citing excessive lawsuits, skyrocketing insurance rates and an exodus of doctors, the AMA is pushing for so-called "tort reform" legislation that would cap payments for pain and suffering due to medical malpractice at \$250,000. According to the report, insurance companies looking to recoup stock market losses, not the legal system, are culpable for burdensome insurance rates. Study results are at <http://centerjd.org>.

GUN INDUSTRY TAKES AIM AT LIABILITY LAWS

The House of Representatives recently passed the "Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act," which would shield gun manufacturers, dealers, distributors and importers from lawsuits related to the misuse of their products. The Senate is expected to vote on the legislation this summer. If passed, it will overrule laws in 24 states that deny immunity to the gun industry. The 1999 gun-death toll in the U.S. was 28,874 persons, according to the Centers for Disease Control.



DEMOCRACY IS IN THE STREETS: Supporters defend the worker-occupied Brukman factory in Buenos Aires. PHOTO: Argentina IMC

DON'T VOTE FOR ME ARGENTINA

By MARINA SITRIN & MARTIN KRYMKIEWCZ

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—The first round of balloting is over in the presidential elections and the field has narrowed from five to two candidates, both from the right-wing Peronist party.

Whoever triumphs in the runoffs on May 18, "law and order" is already the big winner. In the run-up to the April 27 poll, ex-President Carlos Menem, who led the first round with 24 percent of the vote, repeatedly aired a TV commercial that looked like an episode of COPS. It showed lots of blood and violence that faded to a picture of a smiling Menem with "ORDER" spelled out across the screen.

Crime is on many people's minds as a result of the economic collapse that climaxed in December 2001—more than half of the population now lives in poverty. Just like their U.S. counterparts, Argentine politicians use law and order as code. However, they're not talking about street gangs or violence perpetrated by the increasingly militarized police forces. It's social movements that politicians and the press cast as a dangerous criminal element in need of heavy-handed discipline.

The last two years have witnessed the rise of groups of unemployed workers who seize and run abandoned factories. Many people here see this as an exciting new form of political protest and self-organization—as evidenced by the 150 worker-run factories throughout Argentina. Perhaps that's why the government sees it as a threat.

One recent police attack on a worker-run factory is emblematic of the government's stance. During the "Argentinazo" (Argentine Uprising) of December 2001, 50 workers—most of them women—seized the Brukman suit factory in Buenos Aires after learning that the owners planned to shut it down as unprofitable. Over the next 18 months Brukman workers restarted production, brought new equipment, paid off the factory's debt and hired more workers. Twice the owners tried to evict the workers, but each time they were thwarted by strong community support. Over time, Brukman became a symbol to the people of Argentina of the success of self-organization.

On April 18—acting on a court order from a judge who was appointed during Argentina's 1976-83 military dictatorship—five workers guarding the factory were evicted by hundreds of federal police. Three days later, 7,000 demonstrators filled city blocks intending to retake the factory. The police, also numbering in the thousands,

sometimes out in the street, to discuss relevant issues. There is a coordinator (facilitator of sorts) who has a microphone and a sound system. It begins with suggesting topics for discussion. At one assembly, the upcoming election was debated and discussed. The participants all agreed the election was a farce and decided to organize a carnival with other neighborhoods to both highlight the empty promises of the election, as well as show what "democracy looks like."

For this reason, many said they would vote only to vote against Menem. Half of all voters said they will not vote for Menem under any circumstances. His rule from 1989-99 was marked by rampant corruption capped by a severe recession. Thousands in the social movements counsel that the trap of the elections is the notion of not voting for, but rather against a politician.

Voters say they have no choice. The other candidate in the second round is Menem's fellow Peronist Nestor Kirchner. Both espouse order and a stronger economy, which means selling off natural resources and doing what the international financial institutions demand. And until the crash of December 19 and 20, 2001, Argentina was the "emerging" example for the success of these institutions. Now no one believes the elections will improve the desolate economic situation of the country.

Graffiti all over Buenos Aires reads, "No to the electoral trap," "They all must go," and "Vote with a blank ballot," as well as, "Don't vote." In fact, it looks like the top vote getter in the first round was spoiled ballots and "They all must go," which was a ballot option. Most Argentines do not believe they will be able to participate in the decision-making of the elected government.

For these reasons, elections are not the main focus. Many of the movements are creating a new kind of politics based in direct democracy and horizontal decision-making—something that cannot come from voting for the lesser of evils. Since December 2001, Argentines have been searching for and inventing new social spaces so as to implement new forms of decision-making.

One of these new forms is the assemblies, in which community members meet,

sometimes out in the street, to discuss relevant issues. There is a coordinator (facilitator of sorts) who has a microphone and a sound system. It begins with suggesting topics for discussion. At one assembly, the upcoming election was debated and discussed. The participants all agreed the election was a farce and decided to organize a carnival with other neighborhoods to both highlight the empty promises of the election, as well as show what "democracy looks like."

"You can see more democracy in a weekly neighborhood assembly on a street corner than in anything that comes from voting every few years," says Paula, a member of Asamblea Sid Campeador.

Also discussed was how to help a neighboring community under threat of eviction, as well as other day-to-day matters, discussion of the discussions themselves, and what it means when an agreement is reached. One person suggested making decisions binding, which spurred further discussion as to what direct democracy and "horizontalism" mean individually and collectively. A number of people say their dream is not only for Argentina, but for the world, to function with their version of local assemblies.

The powerful cannot buy love, confidence, imagination and desire; they are the basis of the new values and new struggles in these communities. "Our dreams do not fit in your ballot boxes," says the unemployed workers' movement. This knowledge is dangerous to those in power and through the elections, the new government, whatever it is, will claim to have the mandate of the people, and will try to repress them more.

Nonetheless, factory occupations, movements of asambleas and international solidarity continue to invent creative forms of disobedience against an inhumane order. Another world is not only possible—it is being created, and no new politician or elected official can stop this creation.



Ex-president Carlos Menem, who led the first round with 24 percent of the vote, repeatedly aired a TV commercial that looked like an episode of COPS. It showed lots of blood and violence that faded to a picture of a smiling Menem with ORDER spelled out across the screen.



POR JOHN TARLETON
 TRADUCIDO POR SILVIA ARANA

Familiares y amigos de Santiago “Chago” Villanueva celebraron una decisión clave en el juicio contra los responsables de su muerte el pasado 16 de abril, mientras continúan lamentando su muerte.

Villanueva, 35 años, un conocido activista y músico folklorista afrodominicano de Washington Heights murió

bajo custodia policial hace un año en Bloomfield, New Jersey. Villanueva estaba en su trabajo, en una fábrica de esa localidad, cuando sufrió un ataque de epilepsia. Sus compañeros pidieron una ambulancia pero la policía llegó primero. Los cuatro policías blancos, sin hacer ninguna indagatoria, supusieron que estaba bajo efectos de drogas. Lo esposaron, insultándolo, gritándole a él y a sus colegas que hablaran inglés, lo tiraron al piso y uno

UN EJÉRCITO DE VELAS: Una ayudita para que este aniversario de su muerte sea “menos insoportable.” FOTO: Erick Setterlund.

RECORDANDO A CHAGO

se sentó encima de la víctima, hasta que este dejó de respirar.

El 15 de abril pasado, Richard Chiarello, Vicent DeFabrizio, Frank Furfaro y Gerald Filippone fueron acusados de negligencia criminal, cargo por el que podrían pasar un máximo de 10 años en la cárcel. Los cuatro oficiales fueron asignados a “tareas de escritorio” y siguen cobrando sus salarios.

“Nos da un pequeño consuelo saber que se ha hecho algo. La oficina del fiscal no quería hablar conmigo. Quieren acallarnos, no les gusta que se acuse a cuatro de los suyos”, dijo Lisaann, viuda de Villanueva.

“Es una ayudita para que este aniversario de su muerte sea menos insoportable”, agregó Nina Paulino, que es amiga de

Villanueva desde que él llegó a EE.UU. hace nueve años.

Después de manifestar frente al precinto de policía de Bloomfield, unas 40 personas se reunieron en Washington Heights. Allí, en el parque de la esquina de Broadway y la calle 170 tuvo lugar una emotiva vigilia. Los presentes formaron un círculo, encendieron velas y se turnaron para hablar.

“Si perdemos la memoria, perdemos la posibilidad de lograr justicia. Y si perdemos el sentido de justicia, no tendremos futuro”, dijo Radamés Rodríguez.

Al final de la vigilia llegaron los ancestrales sonos de los tambores y de las voces de los músicos Pa’lo, los compañeros de Chago: “A pa’lo es Santiago! A pa’lo! A pa’lo es Santiago!

PUERTO RICO

LA MARINA FUERA DE VIEQUES

POR ORGANIZACIONES VIEQUEÑES POR LA PAZ

Las organizaciones comunitarias viequeñas que luchan por la paz invitan a nuestros hermanos de la Isla Grande -y de otros lugares- a participar en la celebración del cierre del polígono de tiro en la Isla Nena. El cese del bombardeo es parte importante de las demandas históricas del pueblo, por la desmilitarización, la descontaminación, la devolución y el desarrollo sustentable.

Para iniciar las actividades, a las 12 y un segundo del Primero de Mayo se lanzarán luces de bengala en el área donde estaban localizados los campamentos de resistencia pacífica. A las 10:30 de la mañana recibiremos la lancha de la Isla Grande y a las 11 saldremos en una gran marcha desde la Plaza Pública hasta los portones donde un día estuvo el Campamento García. Tendremos mensajes y un gran “abrazo” a la verja.

Renombraremos el antiguo campamento militar como, Zona Primero de Mayo 2003 y se izarán las banderas de Vieques y de Puerto Rico. Caminaremos hasta el lugar conocido como la “perrera”, donde los militares detuvieron a cientos de “desobedientes”.

El viernes, 2 de mayo a las 7pm, participaremos e invitamos a todos a la Misa en Acción de Gracias por la Paz en la Parroquia Inmaculada Concepción, presidida por los Monseñores Roberto González Nieves, Arzobispo de San Juan, Rubén González Medina, Obispo de Caguas y el Monseñor Corrada del Río, Obispo de Tyler, Texas, entre otros.

El sábado, 3 de mayo a las tres de la tarde, habrá un acto ecuménico por la paz frente a la antigua entrada de la base militar y en la noche una gran vigilia de celebración con piquetes, música, poesía y películas para iniciar esta nueva fase de la lucha por la descontaminación, la devolución de nuestros terrenos y el desarrollo sustentable de un

Vieques Libre.

En estas festividades, traemos a nuestra memoria a aquéllos que antes de nosotros levantaron su voz para denunciar la expropiación de sus terrenos y aquellos que hoy no están con nosotros porque han muerto a causa de la contaminación, las agresiones y el abuso militar. El domingo a las 12 del medio día se visitarán los cementerios para llevar un arreglo floral y orar por aquellos que nos precedieron al encuentro del Padre y que intercedieron ante Dios por la paz de Vieques. Se recordarán, en particular, a David Sanes, Milivý Adams, a Doña Luisa Guadalupe y al cialeño, Ángel Rodríguez Cristóbal, entre otros.

A las dos de la tarde, una delegación de Veteranos de Vietnam Contra de la Guerra (EU), veteranos puertorriqueños y los Veteranos Viequeños por la Paz, celebrarán un acto en contra de la guerra y por la paz mundial. Se concluye la jornada en la Plaza Pública a las 5 de la tarde del domingo con un acto de recordación de los desalojos del área de tiro el 4 de mayo de 2000.

Hoy la esperanza de tantos hombres y mujeres que han luchado por la paz de Vieques se va patentizando en esta gran celebración que estamos anunciando para los primeros días de mayo. Hacemos presentes a los aún prisioneros por la paz de Vieques, Ismael Guadalupe Torres e Israel Medina.

El noble pueblo de Vieques invita a nuestros amigos y hermanos de la Isla Grande a que juntos festejemos nuestro triunfo que redunda en el triunfo para un mundo mejor donde podamos vivir en armonía y paz. Damos gracias a Dios que en Vieques ya no se practicará para ir luego a la guerra y matar a nuestros hermanos. Lamentamos las muertes de los inocentes en Irak quienes están recibiendo bombas y misiles de fuerzas militares que practicaron en el polígono de tiro que la militante lucha del pueblo viequeño-puertorriqueño logró cerrar.

FIESTA EN EL BARRIO

En El Barrio (East Harlem), más precisamente en el Centro Cultural Julia de Burgos, el primer jueves de cada mes se lleva a cabo el Julia’s Jam, una conjunción de música, danza, poesía y otras expresiones del arte y la cultura puertorriqueños en Nueva York. Este mes Julia’s Jam celebrará la paz en la isla de Vieques mientras la marina de Estados Unidos establece un cese de fuego después de 63 años de bombardeos, violaciones a los derechos humanos y contaminación del medio ambiente.

La celebración incluirá música y danza afrocaribeña interpretada por Awilda Sterling acompañada por los Brooklyn Bombers. Se hará presente el actor y autor Edwin Lee Gibson. Leerá su poesía Felix Romero, acompañado en percusión por David Fernandez y Willie Everich. Habrá un espacio de micrófono abierto para los poetas y autores jóvenes. La anfitriona será Aurora Flores.

El Julia de Burgos Cultural Center se encuentra en el corazón del Barrio, en el 1680 de la avenida Lexington, entre las calles 105 y 106 y honra con su nombre la memoria de una de las feministas y poetas más significativas de las letras puertorriqueñas y latinas.

SUEÑOS

viene de la página 12

represiva se le sumó un discurso legitimador que antepuso “el orden” a los más elementales derechos humanos, sociales y políticos, sabemos en qué desencadenó: la dictadura más sangrienta y trágica de la historia argentina, que eliminó a los mejores hombres y mujeres de una generación para imponer un modelo económico que dio inicio a la hecatombe neoliberal que todavía padecemos.

Hoy como ayer, la clase política y una parte importante de los medios de comunicación vinculados a los intereses del poder económico, se muestran cómplices...

Sólo la capacidad de movilización del pueblo podrá oponer resistencia en las calles para detener el avance represivo, y forjar con la lucha el necesario Cambio Social que permita construir una sociedad con Trabajo y Dignidad, sin excluidos, explotadores ni explotados.

Porque creemos en ese camino, alertamos con energía sobre las falsas expectativas que pudiera generar cualquier alternativa de gobierno que emerja de estas elecciones fraudulentas: nada de importancia para el pueblo se resuelve en las urnas, sólo a través de la movilización y la lucha popular desarrollaremos la fuerza necesaria para conquistar el Cambio Social que tanto anhelamos.

Por eso en estas elecciones, impulsamos una boleta programática para impugnar el voto, con las reivindicaciones más sentidas y urgentes para el pueblo:

Contra el avance de la violencia represiva del Estado, Brukman es de los trabajadores! - Libertad a los piqueteros salteños!

Dario, Maxi, Javier y todos los caídos en la lucha popular, ¡presente!



EL INDEPENDIENTE

—AY, PAÍS—

Cuando este periódico esté impreso, los argentinos -al menos algunos- ya habrán votado en las elecciones presidenciales del domingo 27 de abril. Sin embargo, todo parece indicar que no habrá un ganador; que este se dirimirá en una segunda vuelta, o ballottage. De una veintena de candidatos ninguno logró más del 20% de intención de voto, y según el sistema electoral argentino se requiere un 45% de los votos o un 40% con una diferencia porcentual del 10% sobre el segundo candidato. Los candidatos mejor posicionados en las encuestas son los mismos políticos cuyas acciones corruptas y al servicio del FMI generaron las puebladas de diciembre del 2001. En esas jornadas de rebelión el pueblo exigió "Que se vayan todos".

Ahora volvieron dos de los repudiados por millones de argentinos: Menem, ex presidente, y López Murphy, ex ministro de Defensa y de Economía.

Estos dos candidatos son acérrimos defensores de la política económica neoliberal, de los recortes al presupuesto estatal, de las privatizaciones y del uso de la represión para suprimir los conflictos sociales.

Ambos implementaron las políticas causantes de la devastación económica que culminó con la crisis social y política más aguda en la historia del país sudamericano. Y prometen reimplementarlas. Muchos se preguntan dónde está la coalición de izquierda que presente una alternativa en el plano electoral. La coalición no existe. Sólo hay una serie de partidos políticos sin peso en las urnas. Y más significativo aún, una gran parte de los activistas y de las organizaciones populares se han negado a participar de la llamada "farsa" electoral. Consideran que la verdadera democracia se va a construir desde las asambleas, desde los piquetes. Varias organizaciones piqueteras y asambleístas llaman al voto impugnado: reemplazar el voto oficial con una boleta que reclame por justicia social y trabajo, por ejemplo. Algunos grupos harán protestas, o "escraches", contra los candidatos. A continuación, dos de las múltiples posiciones de los sectores populares.

—Por Silvia Arana



ELECCIONES EN ARGENTINA

EL MAL MAYOR } { NUESTROS SUEÑOS NO CABEN EN SUS URNAS

POR MIGUEL BONASSO

La frustración generalizada ante el inminente proceso electoral suele resumirse en dos lugares comunes: "son todos iguales" o "una vez más tenemos que resignarnos al mal menor". La primera afirmación, que en su versión más radical conduce al voto-bronca o la abstención, contiene una verdad parcial y a la vez un peligroso error conceptual: es cierto que la corporación política logró burlar la consigna del "que se vayan todos" para imponer su propia agenda y, en cierta medida, relegitimarse con los comicios, pero eso no significa que todos sean iguales, ni vayan a gobernar del mismo modo. Se podrá argumentar con razón que ninguno de los cinco candidatos con más posibilidades se plantea una reforma en profundidad del *statu quo* económico y social[...] Pero hay un aspecto diferencial que puede tornar abismales lo que aparentan ser matices: la actitud que se asuma desde el Estado frente al conflicto social.

A quienes repiten con razón que están hartos de votar "el mal menor" cabría recordarles que hay un "mal mayor", infinitamente más dañino. Sobran los

ejemplos nacionales y extranjeros [...] cabe una prospección de las gravísimas consecuencias que tendría para el país y para América latina, el ascenso de una derecha represiva y proimperialista que, amparada en los rituales de la democracia representativa como lo estuvo Fujimori, "ordenara" el país a sangre y fuego y le asegurase a Washington el control social imprescindible para redondear la entrega del patrimonio nacional iniciada en la década menemista y continuada en los dos años de Fernando de la Rúa. Ahora vendrían por las tierras, por el agua, por la presencia militar permanente en el territorio nacional, por el desmembramiento de la República en bloques regionales potencialmente secesionistas como podría ser la Patagonia. Ingresaríamos con la cabeza gacha al ALCA y decretaríamos la defunción del Mercosur. Perderíamos la coyuntura histórica, única, de conformar un gran bloque sudamericano, que incluya a Venezuela y los países andinos...La sociedad se partiría en dos bloques irreconciliables; asomaría el fantasma de la guerra civil...

—Página 12, Buenos Aires

POR MOVIMIENTO DE TRABAJADORES DESOCUPADOS "ANÍBAL VERÓN"

Se está reinstalando un clima dictatorial ante la protesta social: "Cuando en Argentina el discurso del orden se impuso con represión para acallar los derechos sociales, el resultado fueron 30.000 desaparecidos y la destrucción del país"

A días de las elecciones, el Gobierno de Duhalde se despidió con las calles copadas por el reclamo popular contra la represión: el brutal desalojo de los trabajadores de Brukman y la arbitraria detención de cuatro dirigentes piqueteros de Salta, coronan un gobierno que se va manchado por la sangre de jóvenes luchadores populares: Darío y Maxi asesinados en el Puente Pueyrredón, y Javier Barrionuevo en Esteban Echeverría; los aprietos y secuestros a militantes de base y la militarización de las fuerzas de represión interior... Las campañas electorales de los candidatos con posibilidades de acceder a la presidencia, no hacen más que agravar esta percepción: desde la centroizquierda hasta la derecha reaccionaria, ninguno escapa al discurso de "imponer el orden": ¿no es acaso esta clase política y los intereses económicos que defiende los principales responsables del "desorden" moral, económico, político y social en que se encuentra el país? El CAOS son ellos, no las protestas que emergen de una sociedad que recupera conciencia y se moviliza por los derechos elementales, el trabajo, la alimentación, la salud, la educación.

El candidato a vicepresidente de Elisa Carrió, candidata del centroizquierda, no se le ocurrió mejor respuesta que anunciar que apelará al Ejército para reorientar la ayuda social con menor conflictividad; el populismo de Rodríguez Saa muestra su verdadera cara llevando como candidato a gobernador bonaerense al militar golpista y experimentado represor Aldo Rico, que acaba de reivindicar el intento de Golpe Militar que encabezó en 1987; Kirchner, continuidad calcada de la mafia duhaldista, propone en su libro de campaña el mismo discurso que aplicó el gobierno en la masacre de Avellaneda: "aislar a los violentos y después reprimir los focos rebeldes".

López Murphy, expresión pura de la derecha neoliberal, aclaró que, en caso de ganar, "no le van a sacar en las calles lo que conquiste en las urnas (recordemos que quien "gane" lo hará con no más del 20 % del electorado), y que reprimirá con toda la fuerza del Estado. Y por último Menem, se presenta como "garantía de orden", y de "un país sin piqueteros en las calles", en estos términos: "hay que combatir la delincuencia, con la ley en la mano, y endureciendo el código penal también". Para demostrar que no es demagogia, la detención de los piqueteros saltinos en la Provincia gobernada por su candidato a vicepresidente, se enmarca en una clara provocación que refuerza ese discurso.

Cuando en el país, a una fuerte situación

SUEÑOS sigue en la página 11



EL INDEPENDIENTE

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